

Interview with Pat Appleberry, former first lady of Northern  
Michigan University, Washington D.C., May 4, 1995  
Interviewed by Russ Magnaghi

RM: Good Morning Pat, what I would like to do is start out with the first question concerning Marquette Northern, what was your first impression of the Upper Peninsula Marquette and Northern Michigan University when you arrived, I guess the other thing is, just to set the record straight, when did you arrive in Marquette?

PA: That was in July of 1983 My first impression of the Upper Peninsula and the city of Marquette was just the extreme beauty of the city. I had never experienced a water living environment as we were going to experience in Marquette and just the beauty of Lake Superior just one in all and I was very excited about that and loved when it got a little stormy, of course I didn't want it to be dangerous so that anyone would be hurt, but I thought it was beautiful the way the water rushes up to the shore. And the big boats that come in from Canada with shipping, those were all very new experiences and I enjoyed that a lot. Northern Michigan University was exciting to be there and to see the excitement of the faculty and students and to continue to help people to better their lives through education.

RM: Now what do you, what do you, just a little background to your own life ?, what was your background, where were you from originally?

PA: I was born in Waverly Missouri, Jim and I had set most of our careers in Missouri, Oklahoma and Kansas, before moving to Marquette. So that part of the United States of the Midwest is different than the climate and location of Marquette, Michigan.

RM: So how did you see your roll as first lady of Northern?

PA: I wanted always to be a part of the development of both the University and the community, because the community is closely linked with campus activities so I worked to do that while I was there. The thing that I liked to be most in my life is to help people so that their lives can be better and enriched.

RM: When, what was now as first lady were you doing other thing, other than just campus activities were you involved in anything.

PA: The activities I was involved in while I was in Marquette, I worked closely with hospice, because I have always been very involved in and interested in giving people dignity in death. I worked to help develop propalon and Marge and Bill Vandement were just in the city recently in celebration of the theater departments American award, and I ask her about Propalon and she said it is full with a waiting list, and as you know that is for quadriplegic's, and I thought it was just a wonderful, wonderful

facility and so I was happy to be able to help set on that board and do that planning. I also, as I was leaving Marquette to help develop I believe it is called Beacon House, I am sorry I may not be correct on the title, but it is the house where cancer patients come and stay while they are getting their treatment. And I helped with the renovation of that building and I believe now that there are two of those. It makes me really feel good to leave a community and know that as I leave that there are things there that I helped establish that will go on for the good of humankind for a long time.

RM: Well in terms of on campus activities, people still remember your parties, picnics, etc, could you talk a little about them what you sort of had in mind in terms of having those festivals, and do you remember the different names you had?

PA: I always like to do that, because I thought it was thank you to the faculty and to the students and to the physical plant people. I liked to always have a different theme, and as we have special exchange with one another we learn more about each other and we become a better community. So I think those things are very important, we need to be friend raisers and fund raisers as we think about whatever cause or purpose we are working toward or for.

RM: Now do you, I remember you had the picnics the campus picnics there.

PA: That was usually a fall reception for the faculty and the physical plant and each year we did a different theme. The last party that I gave for the faculty we had 700 in attendance, and I had a lot of people help me plan and work on those things months in advance. But I very very much like to work with special events. In fact in even through the year thought about having that kind of business, and certainly here in the Washington D.C there are many people that do. But I am doing some other things now, working in art and developing my interest in water color and really really enjoying that.

RM: Now back to those parties, they were receptions usually in the fall.

PA: Yes. Then during the year we usually had a party for the major, the presidents club, the major donors of the University and different departments send campus faculty members for different reasons would be hosted in the house. We usually hosted in the home 2500 to 3000 people a year. That was just in the residence and of course there were other events on campus throughout the year. A variety of students honors groups, residents hall people, just a number of things. I also helped with the business department and a couple of years did dinner and gave a little talk how to be socially responsible and correct in conversation and dining and what you wear in meeting clients and going to visit CEO.

RM: That is kind of interesting, because going through Northern's history that has been the theme over the years, since beginning of the University, try to get the students upgraded them in terms of there social interaction and dress and so on.

PA: Another thing that I really enjoyed a lot was First Impressions, and that is a group of students, and at the time when we were on campus I believe that membership was 50 students. Limited to 50 students, and I am sorry I cannot come up with the name right now of the person who started this, but it was 50 students who helped with a variety of things on campus. And I hosted them many times in our home and we started a Christmas dinner activities with those students and faculty members and it was really a successful thing.

RM: While you were there had they started the Presidents, Presidents Ball.

PA: No. We didn't call it the Presidents Ball, we had an activities, I don't believe we ever had a ball.

RM: Okay, But they, this was with First Impressions?

PA: Yes.

RM: they were here on campus.

PA: Yes.

RM: So they were, did they get started then as you, did they get started when you were there I mean at that time.

PA: No. they were started before we came to the University. I believe the year or so before.

RM: so they are still around today?

PA: Yes, it is a strong, very very strong group of young people. Another thing I always enjoyed doing on campus, and this is very personal thing and I will not elaborate on it, other than to say that, I feel I was able to help a number of students through counseling when they had difficult, challenging times. That made me feel good.

RM: Now then when you have had these activities, usually the University staff took care of the details, but you got involved with the receptions, with the public receptions, for the faculty and staff you directed that involvement. In terms of ? ?.

PA: I was directly involved with everything that went on, on campus, that went on under our name.

RM: So the activities at Kaye House, and so on you oversaw.

PA: yes, I did, I spent a lot of time. My life, I really have been a professional volunteer all of my life.

RM: How did this, how what you did, on Northern campus differ or compliment what you did versus as Kansas or Pittsburgh campus.

PA: It was different on Pittsburgh, Kent University, because when we took that responsibility on that campus I was eager to be team mate and help my husband the President, but I also had two small children, two young boys. I determined that when I went to that campus as long as they were young I would not be away from the home more than two nights a week, because my first responsibility was to raise these two children. As they got older then I was involved in more campus and community activities, because the roll of the president and first lady many many campus is a seven day a week responsibility. But while the children were young I chose a different route.

RM: Getting to that, the idea of 7 day a week job, could you comment on that, how hectic was it? on Northern campus, while you were there, taking care of these various responsibilities.

PA: Well when you think about the history of the University that you have freshmen every year, you know that you have seniors every year and you have new faculty every year. So all these people have to be welcomed on a first time basis. And so those are things that are done year in and year out. And many of those activities of welcoming are done on the weekend through different types of weekend events. And there are many things on Saturday and Sunday as well as Monday through Friday. But I think as you take a public responsibility you really have to enjoy people and so the full schedule is all right because you like what you are doing.

RM: so you maintained that full schedule then?

PA: yes I did.

RM: What were, what was some of the results of your Marquette experience, what conclusions would you come to in terms of you know your involvement with Northern and Marquette community.

PA: Well the first thing I would like to say about the Marquette Community is that it was such a welcoming, welcoming community. We felt that from the time of our arrival to when we left the city, as I said in leaving I would say again today I feel good about helping ? 8 years of the history of the Institution and the community. And while I was there I was worked just as hard as I could to encourage and to communicate and make things better and I feel good about that.

RM: So then you interacted kind of University social level, you said you interacted on a student, interacted with students when they had problems and so on, interacted also with the Marquette

Community.

PA: Yes. And I loved the little mini vacations I took. Because the area was so new to me and they there were places you could drive away for hour or hour and half where the scenery was absolutely beautiful and I love flowers the wild flowers, I even tried to hunt for mushrooms but I didn't have any luck there with that. And I love to go to Ishpeming to Andreacki Grocery Store, I love those people and in fact when I was there this past September I went back to see them. And Loinsteens in Negaunee. There gone now, but those were special places and I learned a lot from those people who had lived in the community for a long time.

RM: Are there any other comments or ideas you would like to make in terms of your experiences at Northern? Anything I didn't ask you. Okay.

PA: In closing Russ I would like to leave with these impressions. I will never forget at a honors banquet this women stood up and she looked to me like she was 45 or so and she was a straight A student, coming to school everyday, driving on the Sceney stretch, if I remembering that correctly, and I believe she drove an hour and a half everyday, and she had four children. And I thought what a privilege it was to see this women being able to complete this goal that she had set and what effort and challenge she had had to overcome to do it. With the three hour drive everyday. And that is so exciting and a memory in my life. Such a good memory from Northern. Another thing I want to thank all of the private citizens who gave abundantly of there funds as well as there time for the good of the University. And then I remember at one of those faculty things that we did in the fall. I asked many of the faculty members, that wanted to bring books that they offered, and on that table we had so very many, and all these three things or each of these three things I have mentioned are exciting strengths of the University and make very fond memories as I look back on my experience there. I am very please and happy to have shared in those things.

RM: I guess one thing to bring up you can comment on it, but I think you were one of the first people certainly in the administration level, and any level, to kind of, weren't you one of the first people to promote Northern's History, you said you had the table with faculty books and so on, didn't you do some other things, didn't you have a reception to focus on Northern History?

PA: Well yes I did, I am sure others have done that in the past too. But it is important to look back on our history so we can look forward to our future.

RM: Thank you.